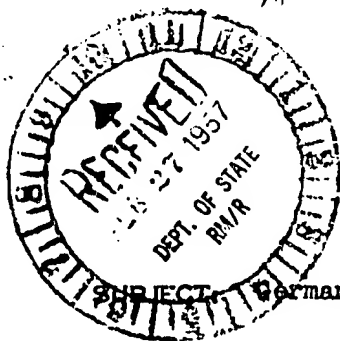


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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Memorandum of Conversation

DATE: February 18, 1957



SUBJECT: German Reunification and European Security

PARTICIPANTS: Dr. Heinz L. Krekeler, German Ambassador
Mr. Erich Ollenhauer, Leader, German Social Democratic Party
Mr. Fritz Heine, Press Chief, German Social Democratic Party
The Secretary of State
Mr. Carl W. McCardle, Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs
Mr. John W. Jones, Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs
~~XXXXXXXXXX~~
Mr. Raymond E. Lisle, Deputy Director, Office of German Affairs

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Mr. Ollenhauer said that the great problem of the day was whether it was not now possible for the three Western Powers to reach agreement with the Soviets on the reunification of Germany by free elections within the framework of a European security pact.

The Secretary recalled the Western Powers had proposed at Geneva reunification by free elections and had put forward the concept of a European security arrangement. The Soviets rejected the proposal and had talked of the prior necessity of extending the "social gains" of East Germany to the whole of the country. He doubted that military security is a dominant factor in Soviet reluctance to agree to German reunification. The main element is the impact reunification would have on the satellites. The Soviet Union will be unwilling to enter into any agreement on the reunification of Germany which would have the effect of extending a free society to the East until it has finally accepted the inevitable development of a new and more independent status for Poland, Hungary and the other satellite countries. When the Soviets come to realize that a greater degree of independence must be permitted the satellites, they will accept more readily the reunification of Germany. The people of the satellites are making good progress in educating the Soviets in this direction. Although there are Stalinist tendencies in the Soviet Union, these are not likely to prevail. We foresee that the Soviet Union will ultimately be surrounded by states independent of, but not unfriendly to, the Soviets. When this situation has developed, the Soviets will agree to the reunification of Germany. The problem, therefore, in inducing Soviet agreement to German reunification is not military security. The Soviets understand they would be given this anyway. Until the Soviet Union accepts the need for a greater degree of independence among the satellites, it will not respond favorably to any proposal for reunification.

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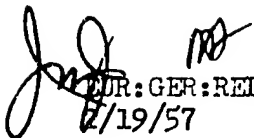
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Mr. Ollenhauer emphasized that the Soviets know that if there were free elections in Germany, the Germans would all be on the side of the West. They prefer to have at least the seventeen million people of East Germany within the Soviet orbit. Therefore it is necessary to demonstrate to the Soviets that if Germany is reunified, they will have guaranteed security.

The Secretary pointed out that the Soviets must realize there can be no greater danger to European security than a divided Germany not tied in with Western Europe. In the long run, inability to achieve reunification will lead to the belief that the only solution is force. The Soviets must recognize that only by German reunification can this element of discontent be removed. From their own viewpoint, it is desirable that a reunified Germany be tied closely to the Western countries which will discourage and prevent any military adventures. The Soviets will maintain their hold in East Germany until the problem of the satellites is solved. The U. S. would be glad to see the Soviet Union surrounded by friendly governments and has no desire to reestablish the concept of the cordon sanitaire. If the Soviets delay too long, however, this will be dangerous for them, as they will have no chance to surround themselves with friendly countries. Ultimately discontent will grow and have an explosive effect in the orbit generally and in East Germany, which will create great problems everywhere. We must therefore all strive to make it easier for the Soviets to grant independence to the satellite countries and in that way facilitate German reunification. The Secretary said the President and he are doing all in their power in this direction. This is the greatest contribution that we can make to German reunification and European security.

Mr. Ollenhauer did not respond and the discussion turned to other matters.

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